

Dr. *F R E E*'s
E D I T I O N

OF THE

Rev. Mr. *John Wesley's*

First PENNY-LETTER, &c.

With NOTES upon the *Original Text*,

Addressed to

Mr. *W E S L E Y*;

And Likewise

A DEDICATION to the Reverend AUTHOR,

The SECOND IMPRESSION.

And it came to pass at Noon, that Elijah mocked them.

1 Kings xviii. 27.

*The Lips of Truth shall be established for ever: but a lying Tongue
is but for a Moment.*

Prov. xii. 19.

Αλλ' ἡ μὲν ἰσὶ καὶ ζήλῳ, ἀνάγκη ἵσται καὶ τὸν οἶκον· ἡ γὰρ τῆς
ἐκκλησίας παραθήκη, ὃ μὲν οἶκος γαρτρίζεται ὡς ἰσὺς, νόστος δὲ
καὶ ζήλῳ· καὶ δαίμων μὲν ὅλος ἐδὲ τὸ ἔργον γαρτρίζεται ὡς ἰσὺς.

Justin. Martyr. Respons. ad 22. Q. ad Orthodoxos.

L O N D O N:

Printed for the AUTHOR, and sold by Mr. SANDBY, at the *Ship*,
opposite St. Dunstan's Church in *Fleet-Street*; Mr. SCOTT and
Mr. STEVENS, in *Pater-noster Row*; Mr. COOKE, at the *Royal
Exchange*; Mr. PARKER and Mr. PRINCE in *Oxford*, and Mr.
FREDERICK in *Bath*. 1759.

[Price SIX-PENCE.]

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

TOwards the End of my Preface to the Sermon preached before the University of Oxford, on Whitsunday last, I publickly told Mr. Wesley, "that in Case he were not convinced by the Extracts there printed, that the People, who pass under the Denomination of Methodists openly maintained such Opinions, as I had charged upon them, &c." "he should have the Civility of a particular Answer, &c." imagining when I used the Word Civility, that I should have no Occasion to depart from my Purpose, by Reason of any Disingenuity on the Part of Mr. Wesley, more than what had appeared in his first Letter: But having since received a Second, wherein there is likewise such a strange Mixture of Sanctity and Prevarication, such praying, sneering, canting, and recanting, expunging, forging, I cannot think myself strictly bound to adhere in every particular to my first Intention.

Nor is it fair to expect from a Man concerned with such an Adversary, that he should keep the same unalterable steady Countenance though he maintain the same Argument; the Reader therefore must impute the Variety of Humour in my Remarks, to the various Shifts and Evasions of the Proteus, with whom I engage, it being necessary to pursue him in all his Forms, till I shew him in that, which may probably be his last.

T H E
D E D I C A T I O N

To the Reverend JOHN WESLEY, M. A. late FELLOW of Lincoln College in Oxford; FOUNDER of the Methodists, at the Foundery, on Wind-Mill-Hill, near St. Luke's Hospital in London, &c. &c.

Reverend SIR,

AS you are a Scholar, you must know, that it is no uncommon Practice in the *learned World*, for Persons, who have a particular Esteem for an *Author*, to be desirous of putting out the most elaborate and elegant *Editions* of his Works, and dedicating them likewise to such as are supposed to be his greatest *Admirers*.

For this Reason, as I imagine, that there is no Body sonder of you than yourself, I dedicate this new Edition of your last little Pieces to you : The Gems are small indeed, but I hope, they will receive some Lustre from the Pains, which I have bestowed upon them.

I confess however, that next to obliging you, I was willing likewise to seize so fair an Opportunity of serving myself. For we *Sinners*, being humble Imitators of you *Saints*, feel something of the like Passions, and are actuated by a Love of Fame as well as you ;

Sic fulgente trahit constrictos Gloria Curru

Non minus ignotos generosis——

Hor.

And therefore being not quite so capable of attaining it, by compassing *Sea and Land*, and performing *Signs*, and *Wonders*, as you have done, I was willing to lay hold of your Cloak, or stick in your Skirts a little, that in your Ascent to the aerial Temple of *Renown*, I also might be shewn

to this Generation, by being so remarkably honoured with your good Company.

And now, Sir, having frankly told you the Motives, which urged me to this *Dedication*; that it was to please you, and acquire some Degree of Reputation to myself by such extraordinary Connections: It only remains, that I make some Apology for my new Manner of Addressing you, and tell you, as I have hinted to the Publick, that you have been the Occasion of all this, by first shewing an Example of surprizing Levity yourself. For you must certainly be in Jest; and jesting too with the most sacred Things, when you set out with such a solemn Account of your "*Fear of God, your Truth and Love; that you durst not return Evil for Evil, or Railing for Railing,*" and yet a little after talk in such a different Strain; nay, rave and rant, and domineer, and scold: There is no Body doubts, but that you were in Earnest here, and therefore the former Part, however solemn, must be all a Jest.

To be sure this Character of yours is such, as requires some Skill to fix: But notwithstanding, I think that I have hit upon it. What do they call the Name? *Μῖμος, ὑποκριτής, Mimus, Hypocrita?* You must know—for you are very well acquainted with the GREEK; *Castalio*, I think, renders it by *Histrion*, that is a *Comedian* or *Player*, one that acts a *personated* Part to get a Penny by it. For *Persona* is a Mask, and *Persona tragica* is still a Mask, though perhaps with a grievous Countenance.

For my Part, I choose to appear without the Mask; and so, Sir, as I am of a sociable Disposition, and can laugh with those, who are disposed to laugh; though I may not carry my Jokes so far as you, upon some Subjects, yet where the Matter will bear it, we will lay aside this Severity a little, this *Wormwood and the Gall*, which you complain of, and use occasionally a little *Merriment*: Which Method perhaps may discover to the World, on which Side the Truth shall lie, as effectually as a *serious* Argument. I am therefore for the Sake of Truth in this, or any other Manner,

Reverend Sir,

Your very humble Servant,

Southwark,
Nov. 4, 1758.

JOHN FREE.

A

Letter to the Rev. Dr. FREE.

By JOHN WESLEY, M. A.

Divided into *Chapter* and *Verse* by the EDITOR.

CHAP. I.

CONTENTS. *Mr. Wesley quotes a Passage from Dr. Free's Pamphlet to the Salters; acquiesces in the Doctor's Opinion, as far as he understands it: But afterwards reads wrong, or wilfully mistakes in his reading; Reasons from this Mistake; and so Blunder begets Blunder and his Brethren, to the End of the first Chapter.*

TULLAMORE, May 2, 1758.

REVEREND SIR,

I. **A** LITTLE Tract appearing under your Name was Yesterday put into my Hands.

Dr. Free's Notes upon Mr. Wesley's Letter, addressed to Mr. Wesley.

CHAP. I.

Reverend Sir,

YOUR Letter bears date May 2, 1758. from a Place called *Tullamore*, as I am informed, in *Ireland*—a little unlucky! For whether it be owing to the Climate, or not, you make, what they call a BULL at first setting out: And to afford you some Diversion, you

you will see him *baited* by and by, in the Note upon the third Verse of this Chapter.

Dr. Free's Note upon Chap. 1. Verse 1.

Obsecro, Populares! The World is hereby desired to take Notice, that by his own Confession, the Reverend Mr. *Wesley* generated this memorable *Pseud-apostolick* Epistle in the Compass of one Day, in the Year of our Lord 1758. *id Populus curat Scilicet.* And he makes this Declaration--that his Followers may learn to admire his *Inspiration* or *Ingenuity*, and entertain at the same Time, a proper Contempt of the *Meanness* or *Slowness* of his Adversary. Though *Tully* somewhere says *Opinionum Commenta delet Dies.* In this Sense, I believe Mr. *Wesley's* Epistle may be the *Being* of one Day; and considering the Fate of some ingenious Writers, I draw some Comfort too from another Passage of the same Author, to this Effect, *ARISTOTELES ait omnes ingeniosos esse melancholicos libenter igitur me fateor tardiores.*

Mr. Wesley's Letter.

2. You therein call upon me, To speak, "if I have any Exceptions to make to what is advanced,"

3. And promise to "reply as fairly and candidly as I can expect, provided those Exceptions be drawn up, as you have set the Example, in a short Compass, [and in] the Manner wherein all wise and good People would chuse to manage a Religious Dispute." *

4. "In a short Compass," Sir, they will certainly be drawn up, for my own Sake, as well as yours.

5. For I know the Value of Time, and would gladly employ it all in what more immediately relates to Eternity.

Dr. Free's Note.

These Verses contain a very imperfect, as well as unfair Representation of the Words of Dr. Free ; as will appear to any one, who has read his *Postscript* to the Articles proposed to the Company of *Salters* ; for the Passage is really this :

P. S. To the Publick.

“ As the *Author* foresees, that the *Self-sufficiency* and *Ignorance* of many of the *low*
 “ People among the *Methodists* may prompt
 “ them to shew their Skill in *Divinity*, and
 “ change a Word with him upon this Occasion :
 “ To save these Gentlemen a needless Trou-
 “ ble, he thinks proper to DECLARE ; that if
 “ either of the Mr. *Wesleys*, who still pass un-
 “ der that *Denomination*, have any *Exceptions*
 “ to make to what is here advanced, provided
 “ those *Exceptions* be drawn up, as he has set
 “ the Example, in as short a Compass as the
 “ Nature of *Controversy* will admit, the Man-
 “ ner, in which, all *wise* and *good* People,
 “ would choose to manage a *Religious* Dis-
 “ pute,” &c.

Now, Sir, how comes it to pass, that you represent what was addressed *jointly* to you and your Brother, as *solely* directed to yourself? This is by no Means a fair *Quotation*, and your false Dealing is much aggravated by the *Interpolation* of the Words—[and in] which affords you an *Handle* for some idle *Declamation*—
 , whereas

whereas the Original has not any such Words as—[*and in*] the Manner"—but runs thus,—“ in as short a Compass as the Nature of Controversy will admit, the Manner,” &c. This material Change must proceed either from *Inattention*, *Ignorance*, or bad *Design*.

If it proceeded from *Inattention*; it must shew great Contempt of the Publick not to read a Thing over before you committed it to Print: If it proceeded from *Ignorance*; as you affect the *Patriarch* or *Apostle*, you may be ashamed not to have your *Wits* as much about you, as when you was a *School-boy*. For to be sure you then knew the Meaning of *Apposition*, and understood your *Grammar*; you should not have forgot it here, *oportebat fuisse Memoriam*. Lastly, if it was through bad *Design*, that you made this Alteration, why then you cannot be really an *honest* Man. And to say nothing of what the World may think of you, it is my Opinion, that if you want *Honesty*, Jesus Christ will never own you for his Disciple, let your Pretences to *Religion* be what they will.

Mr. Wesley's Letter.

6. But I do not promise to draw them up in that Manner, whereof *you have set the Example*.

7. I cannot; I dare not; For I fear God, and do really believe there is a Judgment to come. Therefore I dare not *return Evil for Evil*; neither *Railing for Railing*.

8. Nor can I allow, that your Manner of treating this Subject, is that “ wherein all *wise* and *good* People, would chuse to manage a Religious Dispute.” Far, very far from it.

9. I shall rejoice, if a little more Fairness and Candor, should appear in your future Writings.

10. But

10. But I cannot expect it; for the *nigræ succus loliginis*, Wormwood and Gall seem to have infected your very Vitals.

Dr. Free's Note.

The Tract of mine, which Mr. *Wesley* so belabours in these Verses, is that entitled *Certain Articles* proposed to the serious Consideration of the Company of *Salters* in *London*, &c. Of which the *Reader* may see a Vindication in the Preface to my *Sermon* before the University of *Oxford*: And therefore I hope he will excuse me here, if I take no farther Notice of this notable Passage.

Mr. Wesley's Letter.

C H A P. II.

CONTENTS. *Mr. Wesley* tells a Story about his convincing *Bishop Gibson*—confesses his Weakness; prays to the GOD of Truth and Love to assist him—Promises a Thing which he is not able to perform, tells a Fib about answering an Objection,—loses his Understanding and talks without Coherence or Connexion, denies a notorious Fact supported by the most evident Proof, and ends with a false Assertion.

1. **T**HE Quotation from *Bishop Gibson*, which takes up Five out of Nineteen Pages, I have particularly answered already *.

2. And in a Manner wherewith I have good Reason to believe, his Lordship was entirely satisfied. With his Lordship therefore I have no present Concern: My Business now is with you only.

3. And seeing you are “now ready,” (as you express it) “to run a Tilt,” I must make what Defence I can.

4. Only you must excuse me from Meeting you on the same Ground, or fighting you with the same Weapons.

* In a Letter to the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of *London*.

C H A P. II.

Dr. Free's Notes.

FRIEND *Wesley*, from a Man desirous, as thou wouldst seem to be (but a little before) of employing all thy *Time*, in what relates to *Eternity*, is not this an *idle* and invidious Reflection? What Matter is it, as to the Argument, how many Pages of my Pamphlet are taken up by the Quotation from Bishop *Gibson*? If what Bishop *Gibson* says be true, the "*God of Truth and Love*," whom thou invokest but a little after would never have directed Thee, to have reflected upon me for *ministring* to the *Truth* by introducing the *Bishop's* Testimony. I thought it *better than my own*; and is it consistent, in the very Minute, that thou makest such *Profession* of *Candor* and *Christian Charity*, to be thus *sarcastical* upon my *Humility*? The *Pharisee* in the Gospel, thanked God that he was not a *Sinner*, and if this be your Practice, I thank God, that I am not such a *Saint*. For there is much of human *Frailty* in this Conduct, which is quite inconsistent with thy *Christian Perfection*. I have now done with my Plainness, Sir, and shall henceforth keep my Distance.

As to your Answer then, to the late BISHOP of *London*, for which: you refer us to your Letter—you should have told us the *Page*: For I cannot find it—No!—No!—no such Answer, I assure you---I can find no such Answer.

And

And therefore I am the more astonished how you could tell us that the *Bishop* was so entirely satisfied with it: For my Part I want Satisfaction upon the Subject, and am sorry to hear you cannot meet me on the same *Ground*, or fight with the same *Weapons*, that I do. For had this been the Case, I should have *given*, or *received* Satisfaction, before this Time. My *Ground* is sure Ground, Sir, and my *Weapons* such as will seldom *fail me*. Whereas you make use of some little *Instruments* beside the *Truth*, which will always break in your Hands, and leave you at the Mercy of your Adversary.

Mr. Wesley's Letter.

5. My Weapons are only Truth and Love. May the God of Truth and Love strengthen my Weakness!

Dr. Free's Note.

I should like this Declaration much better, if I could think, that such a Principle steadily influenced your Practice: But as you have misrepresented me so grossly in your Quotations, and so designedly; and now trifle thus with your solemn *Protestations*, I have Reason, (though I may be sorry to say it) even in this Particular, to doubt of your Integrity, notwithstanding your serious Mention, of what ought to affect every thinking Man, our Relation to *Eternity*.

Mr. Wesley's Letter.

6 I wave what relates to Mr. V—'s personal Character, which is too well known to need my Defence of it: As likewise the Occurrence (real or imaginary I cannot tell) which gave Birth to your Performance.

Dr. Free's Note.

I take an Opportunity from this *Passage*, to inform the *Publick*, that the Reason, why I gave myself the Trouble of printing Mr. *W*'s Letter in this Manner, was not barely for the Sake of *examining* it myself, and, as I saw Occasion, to answer it: But also to set this Gentleman and his Adherents an Example of *fair Dealing* in *Controversy*; to which they seem to be entire Strangers. For what Reader, but would imagine from these Words of Mr. *Wesley's*, that his Friend Mr. *V—* had suffered in his *personal* Character by my Writings? The Tract to the *Salters* is easily read over. Let any one judge from the Reading, whether I have concerned myself with this Mr. *V—* any otherwise than in his *Character* of a *Methodist*, a *Character*, which on Account of his Connexion with the *Methodists*, and his preaching *their Doctrines*, had even in the Esteem of his own *Hearers*, been justly fixed upon him. Of the Influence of this *publick Character* upon the *personal*, Mr. *Wesley* shall hear a little more hereafter; since, in his *second* Letter, he has revived the same *Objection*; but this by the Way. I am only led to take Notice here, of his *Manner* of QUOTATION,
of

of which I would desire the unprejudiced Reader to be also observant, that he may be the better able to do me Justice.

Mr. Wesley's Letter.

7. All that I concern myself with is your Five vehement Assertions, with Regard to the People call'd *Methodists*. These I shall consider in their Order, and prove to be totally false and groundless.

8. The first is this, † “ Their whole Ministry is an “ open and avow'd Opposition to one of the fundamental “ Articles of our Religion.” How so? Why “ the 20th “ Article declares, We may not so expound one Scripture, “ that it be repugnant to another, ‡ And yet it is notorious, that the *Methodists* do ever explain the Word “ *Faith* as it stands in some of St. Paul's Writings, so as “ to make his Doctrines a direct and flat Contradiction to “ that of St. James.”

Dr. Free's Note.

So then, Sir, you chuse to enter the Lists, not upon your *own* Account, or for *particular Opinions of your own*, but as a *Champion* for the *Cause* of the People called *Methodists*? In the Words of my *Postscript* above-cited, I spoke with Hesitation, as if I did not know, but that you had been disposed to have quitted that Profession, this afforded you an Opportunity of disavowing it, if you would; but as you take to it so very *formally*, by declaring yourself their Advocate, what a Weather-cock must the World think you, when in your *second Epistle* you renounce the *very Name*, and declare, that you are no such Person. But of this hereafter.—

To

† P. 4.

‡ P. 5.

*To be, or not to be? ay! there's the Question,
Which WESLEY's Meditations can't resolve.
Conviction tells him he has gone astray:
But yet the PENCE the fætid PENCE of BRASS
Which at the Found'ry, weekly load his 'Palm,
Incline him still to ACT the METHODIST;—
ACT, yet DISOWN,—strange inconsistent Part!
Which Characters the double-minded Man,
UNSTABLE still, yet variously the same.*

Mr. Wesley's Letter.

9. This stale Objection has been answered an hundred Times, so that I really thought we should have heard no more of it.

10. But since it is required, I repeat the Answer once more. By Faith we mean, *The Evidence of Things not seen*: By justifying Faith, a Divine Evidence or Conviction, that Christ *loved me and gave Himself for me*. St. Paul affirms, that a Man is justified by *this Faith*; which St. James never denies; but only asserts that a Man cannot be justified by a *dead Faith*. And this St. Paul never affirms.

Dr. Free's Note.

Mr. Wesley is here affronted at what he calls a *stale* Objection. No wonder, for when Things grow stale, they sometimes grow very strong, and if held to your Nose they will be still more offensive: How to get out of the Smell of this Objection is the Difficulty. To say, that it has been answered an hundred Times, is only telling a *stale* Lye. It is plain to me, Sir, that you cannot answer it now; and I am afraid your Apology will appear to the Reader no better than Nonsense. For your Words are, Verse 10. “by *justifying* “ *Faith*, we mean, a Divine Evidence or Con-
“ viction,

“viſtion, that Chriſt loved me, and gave
“*Himſelf for me.*” Now for the Conſe-
quence!—*Ergo*—“The *Methodiſts* do not ex-
“plain the Word *Faith*, as it ſtands in ſome
“of *St. Paul’s* Writings, ſo as to make the
“Doctrin of *St. Paul* a direct and flat Con-
“tradiction to that of *St. James.*”——Is this
what you call Connexion?——

I’ll tell you one Thing, Sir, *Silver and Gold*
I have none, for that as well as the *Brass* gene-
rally goes to the *Shops* of the *METHODISTS*,
but ſuch as I have, I will give unto you; there-
fore, I ſay, if you can make this *lame* Argu-
ment walk, and bring it to the Growth of a
regular Syllogiſm, I don’t know but I may ho-
nour you with another *Dedication*. *Et eris*
mibi magnus Apollo.

But beſide the Fault in the *Argument*, Sir,
here is a *Whim* or *Conceit* in the *Phraſe*, which
muſt not paſs without Notice. For if one
were to be inquisitive about *Chapter* and *Verſe*,
pray, Sir, in which of *St. Paul’s* Writings, is
it expreſsly ſaid, that *Jeſus Chriſt* died in par-
ticular for *Mr. John Weſley*? Don’t you ſee,
that there is ſomething mighty odd in the
wording of this Paſſage? For by the *Phraſe* it
amounts to this; *St. Paul* affirms, that a Man
is juſtified by having a *Divine Evidence* or
Conviction, that *Jeſus Chriſt* gave himſelf for
Mr. John Weſley!—Are you then in your
Senſes? Or do you think, that other People
have loſt theirs, that you can venture to talk
ſuch Stuff to them as this?

From

From what *Moravian* have you borrowed these *Singularities*? I have heard indeed, (I don't say, I know it to be true) that you have *extracted* near 14 Volumes all *Quintessences*, to be sure, from the *Fanaticism* of the *Germans*, the *English*, and other Nations. For all *Nations* and *Religions* have their *Fanaticks*.

*And thus, you dim your Eyes, and stuff your Head,
With all such Reading, as was never read?* Pope.

Mr. Wesley's Letter.

11. " But St. *James* declares, *Faith without Works is dead*. Therefore it is clearly St. *James's* Meaning, that " a Faith which is without *Virtue* and *Morality*, cannot " produce Salvation. Yet the *Methodists* so explain St. " *Paul* as to affirm that Faith without Virtue or Morality " will produce Salvation." Where? In which of their Writings? This needs some Proof: I absolutely deny the Fact.

12. So that all which follows is mere Flourish, and falls to the Ground at once: And all that you aver of their * " open and scandalous Opposition to the 20th Article," is no better than an open and scandalous Slander.

Dr. Free's Note.

As you are pleased to call my Argument in this Place a *Flourish*, I must reply, Sir, that it is but a short *Flourish* on your Side. For I refer the Reader to the *Preface* and *Appendix* of my *Sermon* preached at OXFORD, where to the Misfortune of your Cause, he will find this open and scandalous *Slander*, as *You* term it, supported by a *Cloud of Witnesses*, and Facts too stubborn to yield to any *flimsy* LIE.

Mr.

C H A P. III.

CONTENTS. *Mr. Wesley continues to produce from Dr. Free's Pamphlet to the Salters some mangled and disjointed Quotations, relating to the Doctrines of the Methodists, of which Doctrines, as he pretends, he never heard before; or at least does not remember them, and therefore desires his Opponent to refresh his Memory.*

I. **Y**OUR second Assertion is this, "the * *Methodist*,
 " for the Perdition of the Souls of his Followers,
 " openly gives our Saviour the Lie, loads the Scripture
 " with Falshood and Contradiction: (And pray what
 " could a *Mahomedan*, or *Infidel*, or the *Devil* himself do
 " more.) Yea, openly blaspheme the Name of *Christ*,
 " by saying, That the Works of Men are of no *Conside-*
 " *ration* at all; that God makes no Distinction between
 " Virtue and Vice, that he does not hate Vice or love
 " Virtue. What *Blasphemy* then and *Impiety* are those
 " Wretches guilty of, who in their diabolical Phrenzy,
 " dare to contradict our Saviour's Authority, and that in
 " such an essential Article of Religion?"

C H A P. III.

Dr. Free's Note.

THIS first Verse, as likewise the greatest
 Part of this Chapter, being made up of
Extracts from my first *Pamphlet* to the Com-
 pany of *Salters* thrown together in a very irre-
 gular Manner, the Reader is desired to peruse
 them as they stand in their proper Places, in
 Order to form a just Notion of their *Extent*
 and *Meaning*. And for the Evidence, which
 Mr. *Wesley* so often calls for to support these
 Passages, I refer the *Reader*, once for all, to

C

the

* P. 7, 8, 9.

the *Preface* of my SERMON, and to the *Appendix* containing the *Blasphemies* and *Delusions* of the *Methodists*, particularly NUMBER V. and to what I have farther to say in my Notes upon Mr. *Wesley's second Letter*, which Notes are just now published, under the Title of a perpetual *Comment*.

Mr. Wesley's Letter.

2. Here also the *Methodists* plead not guilty, and require you to produce your Evidence: To shew in which of their Writings they affirm, That GOD "will not reward every Man according to his Works; that He makes no Distinction between Virtue and Vice; that He does not hate Vice or love Virtue." These are Positions which they never remember to have advanced. If you can, refresh their Memory.

Dr. Free's Note.

I cannot say whether it has been any *Refreshment* or not: But I believe by this Time you feel that I have *rubbed up* your Memory, upon this Subject, in the *Preface* and *Appendix* to my Sermon. Number V. And in my *Edition* of your *second Letter*.

Mr. Wesley's Letter.

3. You assert, Thirdly, the *Methodists*, by these Positions, "destroy the essential Attributes of GOD, and ruin his Character as Judge of the World." Very true——if they held these Positions.

4. But here lies the Mistake. They hold no such Positions. They never did. They detest and abhor them. In arguing therefore on this Supposition, you are again *beating the Air*.

Dr.

Sir, you must certainly be mistaken here. For instead of *beating the Air*, I think, that I am beating the *Methodists*. But perhaps you mean by this, that *you Prophets are become WIND, and the Word of the Lord is not in you*; if so, indeed, I may be *beating the Air*, in beating the *Methodists*.

Mr. Wesley's Letter.

5. You assert, Fourthly, The *Methodists* "teach and propagate * downright Atheism (a capital Crime; and Atheists in some Countries have been put to Death,) Hereby they make Room for all Manner of Vice and Villainy, by which Means the Bands of Society are dissolved. And therefore this Attempt must be considered as a Sort of *Treason* by *Magistrates*."

6. Again we deny the whole Charge, and call for Proof:

7. And, blessed be God, so do the *Magistrates* in *Great-Britain*.

8. Bold, vehement Asseverations will not pass upon them for legal Evidences.

9. Nor indeed on any reasonable Man.

10. They can distinguish between *arguing* and *calling Names*.

11. The former becomes a Gentleman and a Christian: But what is he, who can be guilty of the latter?

Dr. Free's Note.

You may *deny* as you will, Sir, and as you think consistent with your *Credit*: But the *Charge* is supported by *Fact*, and such *Proof* has been given of it, as none but those, who

C 2

have

* P. 10, 11.

Dr. Free's NOTES.

have lost all *Sense of Shame*, as well as *Understanding* can offer to deny.

The Reader may see by the *Testimonies* produced in the *Preface* and *Appendix* to my SERMON, what *Assurance* I have from their own Writings, that the People who pass under the *Denomination* of METHODISTS, nay, who *call themselves* METHODISTS, have maintained such Propositions as these, *viz.*

“ That Men are (*absolutely and finally*)
“ justified *without the Deeds* of any Law
“ whatever, either *natural, ceremonial* or
“ *moral* ;” to the utter Exclusion of all good Works.

“ That there is no *Difference* betwixt
“ the most fervent Devotee and the greatest
“ Ringleader in Prophaneness, &c.

“ That he, who attempts *to do any* Thing
“ easy or difficult, under the Notion of an
“ Act of believing, or any other Act, *in*
“ Order to his *Acceptance to God*, only heaps
“ up more Wrath against himself.”—

Such *Pernicious PRINCIPLES*, I said, tended to destroy our Notions of the essential Attributes of God, and ruin his *Character*, as Judge of the World. And in the Articles to the *Salters*, Page 9. in support of my Assertion, I argued thus ;

“ *First*, If there be no *Distinction* between
“ human Actions, or a *Distinction* of no *Con-*
“ *sideration*, then there can be no such Thing
“ as *Good*, or *Evil* : And consequently no
“ Room for a future Judgment at all. For
“ where there is no Law broken, there is no
“ Harm

" Harm done ; and therefore no Call for
 " Judgment.

" But *Secondly*, If there be a real Distinc-
 " tion between Good and Evil ; then to say
 " that God does not *regard* it, or take it into
 " *Consideration*, but rewards or punishes at
 " random, is making him so foolish as not to
 " distinguish Vice from Virtue ; or so-unjust
 " as to prefer Vice before it ; which Defi-
 " ciency would render him quite unfit to be
 " the Judge of the World.

" In the first Place therefore, according to
 " this Doctrine, we are to have no *Judgment*
 " of the World at all.

" In the next Case—God is represented as
 " *unfit* to be that *Judge*.

" Now if this be not downright *Atheism*,
 " I would be glad to know what it is."

These are the Proofs, Sir, which I submit
 to the Examination of any Man alive, who
 enjoys the Use of his *Understanding*. If you
 can call such *plain Testimonies* and fair *Reason-*
ings only, " bold and vehement *Asseverations*,"
 Men of *common Sense* will doubt your *Honesty* ;
 and the *learned* will be apt to apply to you and
 your *Tribe* the *Reflection* of the Roman Orator,
Licet concurrant omnes plebei [concionatores]
non modo nihil unquam tam eleganter explicabunt,
sed ne hoc quidem ipsum quam subtiliter conclusum
fit, intellegent. Allow this then to be *Argu-*
ing, Sir, to save your own Credit as a *Scholar*,
 and to be consistent with the Concession
 which you made [V. 3.] but a little before.

That

That *if* the *Methodists* held such *Positions*, they would thereby “destroy the essential “ *Attributes* of God, and ruin his *Character*, “ as Judge of the *World*.”

This *Charge* against the People of your *Denomination* being thus supported by *Fact*: It is no Matter to the Publick, whether from among the *Methodists*, you are one of the identical Persons concerned, or not. It may be some Advantage indeed to you to ‘*scape a Scowring*, but in the mean Time the same *Hurt* is done to the *Community*, whether it be done by Mr. WESLEY’s Gang, or be done by Mr. *Wesley*. And I would advise you, if you would avoid all Suspicion of *evil Communication* and Correspondence with such Sort of People, to speak no longer in their Defence. For it is apparent that under the Name of *Methodists*, such *Persons* and such *Opinions* do actually exist. And as I said to the worshipful Company of *Salters*, I say once more to you, “ *Atheism* has been deemed a *capital Crime*, “ and *Atheists* in some Countries have been “ put to Death, as Persons very dangerous to “ a State, at least in the Opinion of those, “ who govern it.

“ For that all wise *Lawgivers* and good “ *Magistrates*, beside that they resent the “ Dishonour done to God, consider the Propagation of *Atheism* as an Attempt to destroy their own *Commonwealth*. Because by “ releasing Men from their natural Fears of a “ Deity, it discharges them from all *moral* “ Obligation; makes Room for all Manner “ of

“ of *Vice* and *Villainy*; by which Means the
“ *Bands* of Society are dissolved, the *Communi-*
“ *nity* is forced to separate; and the *Magis-*
“ *trates* themselves, when all *Government* is
“ overturned, can in that *Character* subsist no
“ longer.

“ You see then, that this Attempt must be
“ considered as a Sort of *Treason* by (wise)
“ Magistrates; because it is an Attack upon
“ themselves: by ruining their Subjects it
“ takes away their very Office; there being,
“ as I observed, no Place for Governors in a
“ Society quite dissolute and abandoned.

“ This then is the Consequence of destroy-
“ ing the Morals of a State, by the Introduc-
“ tion of *direct* Atheism: And therefore to
“ secure the Morals of their People, Magi-
“ strates make Use of that Instrument, which
“ we call Religion, as being in their Opinion,
“ what will contribute most to harmonize
“ and regulate Society, and produce Effects
“ quite opposite to those, which they dread
“ from Atheism.

“ But if *any Form* of RELIGION discourage
“ *Morality*, it can be no Instrument for their
“ Purpose, because it does the *Work* of *Athe-*
“ *ism*. And therefore they must be as much
“ alarmed at the Introduction of *such a Reli-*
“ *gion*, as at the Introduction of *Atheism*; and
“ look upon it in the same Light, as it is at-
“ tended with the same Consequence.”

Now the Form of RELIGION introduced by
the *Methodists* is such, as thus discourages *Mo-*
rality, and to be consistent with their Profes-
sion,

sion, their Teachers often call the *Divines* of the CHURCH of *England*, by Way of *Derision*, MORALISTS: Yet Mr. *Wesley* represents our *Magistrates* themselves as well affected to this Sort of People.

What I have to observe upon this Representation is, *first*, that I cannot believe it to be *true*: and *secondly*, that if it be true, and any of our *Magistrates* are no better principled than is here represented, that then they are by no Means wise or good *Magistrates*, and consequently not fit to hold or discharge any Office of Importance in this Country.

As to the Representation, therefore; notwithstanding, that Mr. *Wesley* uses the Term MAGISTRATES as *universal*, or at least *unlimited*, yet probably he may be able to *specify* no more than the Sheriff of *Bedford*, who appointed him to preach the *Affize* Sermon: Or the *London* Sugar-baker, who, according to the News-Papers, publicly nominated Mr. *Jones* the *Impostor*, for his Chaplain.

If this Officer was guilty of such an Insult upon the Church of *England*, to which he pretended occasionally to conform, I do not doubt, but that he will be properly noted by his *Fellow-Citizens*, as a Person not very fit to hold or discharge the Trust to which he has been promoted. For had this Man been acquainted with any Thing beside his *Sugar* Pans, or formed the least *Idea* of the Office, he pretends to serve, he must have been sensible, that it frequently belongs to the Business of an *English* SHERIFF to be present at the Execution
of

of the *Laws* against notorious *Criminals*. For Instance, *Cheats* and *Impostors* by the *Laws* of *England* are reckoned *notorious* *Criminals*. I think *Bracton* calls a *Traitor* *Seducer*, and had Mr. *Jones* been formally convicted as a *Cheat* and *Impostor*, and ordered by the Court to have been led down *Cheapside* by the *Sheriff* of *LONDON*, to the *Royal Exchange*, with the * Letter from *the Mansions above* pinned to his Back and Breast, and there to have suffered the *Penalties*, which the *Laws* inflict; why the *Sheriff* would have found it his Duty to have attended his *Chaplain* upon this Occasion. By which the World would have been apt to conclude, that either through Ignorance he knew not how to conduct himself in the Office to which he was promoted, or else that he made use of his Authority to countenance Deceit in Breach of his Oath, as being in Breach of the *Laws* of *England*.

For *Deceit*, which is defined by the *Lawyers*, to be a subtle Trick and Device whereunto you may draw all Manner of *Craft* and *Collusion*; and against which there is a Writ called *Breve Deceptione* is an *Offence* both at *common* and *statute* *LAW*. It is generally punished by *Whipping*, or the *Pillory*.

Religious *DECEIT*, or *DECEIT* by *Prophecy* hath other *Penalties*. " For if any Person
 " shall advisedly and directly advance, *publish*,
 " and set forth by *Writing*, *Printing*, *Singing*,
 " or any other open *Speech* or *Deed*, any fond
 " fantastical, or false *Prophecy*, thereby to
 D " make

* See it in the Appendix to Dr. Free's Sermon.

“ make any Dissention, or other Disturbances
 “ in the Realm, he shall for the *first* Offence
 “ be *imprisoned* for a Year, and *forfeit* ten
 “ Pounds ; and for the *second* Offence be *im-*
 “ *prisoned for Life*, and *forfeit his* Goods;
 “ half the *Forfeitures* to the KING, and half
 “ to *him*, who shall sue for them in any Court
 “ of Record.” 5 Eliz. c. 15.

These being the *Laws* and *Constitutions* of
 this Kingdom, one would ask this *Sheriff*, how
 he could consistently with his *Oath*, make
 choice of such a *publick* DECEIVER for his
 CHAPLAIN? For a Clause of the Oath is.—

“ *I will truly and diligently execute the good Laws*
 “ and Statutes of *this Reulm*, and in all Things
 “ *well and truly behave myself in my Office*, for
 “ the Honour of the KING, and the Good of
 “ his SUBJECTS, and discharge the same accord-
 “ ing to the best of my Skill and Power : So help
 “ me God.” 3. Geo. c. 15. Sect. 18, 19.

If these be the *Laws*, this the *Oath* to ob-
 serve those Laws, and this the *Conduct* of the
Magistrate, who took it : We have Reason to
 apprehend, what would be the Fate of this
 KINGDOM ; were the *Magistrates*, as Mr.
Wesley represents, all so well disposed to fa-
 vour the *Methodists*.

C H A P. IV.

CONTENTS. Mr. Wesley supposes an Infallibility in the Church of England like that of the Church of Rome; talks of the Articles as a Rule of Faith preferable to the Holy Scriptures; makes no Difference between fundamental Articles and disputable Points of Faith. Accuses Dr. Free of writing against the Articles, but cannot shew the Place; domineers like a Pædagogue, till he is quite out of Breath, but recovering himself to say something of Arabia and Japan, is seized with a Fit of Meekness, uttering among his last Words Fairness, Candor, Christ.

1. **Y**OU assert, Lastly, That any who chuse a Methodist Clergyman for their Lecturer, * “put into that Office, which should be held by a Minister of the Church of England, an Enemy who undermines not only the legal Establishment of that Church, but also the Foundation of all Religion.”

2. Once more we must call upon you for the Proof: The Proof of these two Particulars, First, that I, John Wesley, am “an Enemy to the Church, and that I undermine not only the legal Establishment of the Church of England, but also the very Foundations of all Religion.” Secondly, That “Mr. V— is an Enemy to the Church, and is undermining all Religion, as well as the Establishment.”

3. Another Word and I have done. Are there “† certain Qualifications required of all Lecturers, before they are by Law permitted to speak to the People?” And is a Subscription to the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion, one of these Qualifications? And is a Person who does not “conform to such Subscription” disqualified to be a Lecturer? Or, who “has ever held or published any Thing contrary to what the Church of England maintains?”

4. Then certainly you, Dr. John Free, are not “permitted by Law to speak to the People.” Neither are you “qualified to be a Lecturer” in any Church in London or England, as by Law established. For you flatly deny and openly oppose more than One or Two of those Articles. You do not in any wise conform to the Subscription you made,

* P. 13.

† P. 14.

made, before you was ordain'd either Priest or Deacon. You both *hold* and *publish* (if you are the Author and Publisher of the Tract before me) what is grossly, palpably "contrary to what the Church of *England* maintains," in her Homilies as well as Articles :

5. Those Homilies to which you have also subscribed, in subscribing the 36th Article. You have subscribed them, Sir : But did you ever read them ?

6. Did you ever read so much as the Three first Homilies ? I beg of you, Sir, to read these at least, before you write again about the Doctrine of the Church of *England*.

7. And would it not be prudent to read a few of the Writings of the *Methodists*, before you undertake a farther Confutation of them ? At present you know not the Men or their Communication. You are as wholly unacquainted both with them and their Doctrines, as if you had lived all your Days in the Islands of *Japan*, or the Deserts of *Arabia*.

8. You have given a furious Assault to you know not whom : And you have done it, you know not why.

9. You have not hurt *me* thereby ;

10. But you have hurt yourself : Perhaps in your Character ; certainly in your Conscience.

11. For this is not doing to others as you would they should do unto you. When you grow cool, I trust you will see this clearly : And will no more accuse, in a Manner so remote from Fairness and Candor.

Rev. Sir,

Your Servant for CHRIST's Sake,

JOHN WESLEY.

Dr. Free's Notes upon Chap. IV. of Mr. Wesley's Letter.

IN my Remarks upon this Chapter, I shall take the Liberty to consider and dispatch, in the first Place, a few scattering Objections at the End of it, relating to my Knowledge of the *Methodists*, and Behaviour to Mr. *Wesley* ; that I may not be interrupted when I come to speak upon a more important Subject, that is, the

the different Nature, Design and Obligation of the different Articles of the Church of *England*, and the Case of the Subscribers to the Articles and Homilies. Where besides the Importance of the Subject; the Errors of Mr. *Wesley* appear to be more particularly gross, and considering, that he is such a Pattern of Christian *Meekness* delivered with some Degree of Arrogance.

First then, for my Conduct to you Mr. *Wesley*. You tell me that by writing the Pamphlet to the Salters, *I have not hurt you, tho' you say, that it is not doing to others, as I would they should do unto me.* As for hurting you in particular; the Design of that Piece was *universal*, and calculated as far as you were concerned, not to hurt, but to convince you: Unless Conviction gives you Pain; if so, you must be subject to some perverse Passions, or strong Prejudices. For *Dispassionate* REASON, clear of these Incumbrances, finds a Pleasure in Conviction, as it desires always to be informed.

And *for doing, as I would be done by.* Please to consider at the Time you wrote this Letter, what Dealings in the literary Way, I had with you. Why truly only this *Communication*; I had with all good Manners said, that if either you or your Brother had any Exceptions to make in the Manner there expressed, and as I expected, I would reply, &c. as fairly and candidly as you could expect from a Man differing in Opinion from yourselves. Now then, Sir, if you put the Question, whether I should
take

take Offence at such a civil *Challenge*? I declare upon my *Honour*, that I should not. I have therefore thus far done by you, as I would be done by.

And further than this. I made no other Address to you in your own *Person*, nor concerned myself any farther with your *Writings* in particular, than just transcribing a Passage from Bishop *Gibson's* Pastoral Letter, which contained, it seems, an *Extract* from one of your Journals. This also I believe no Man, beside yourself, would ever have considered as an Offence, at least I should not; unless there had been some *Interpolation* or base *Omission*, which had perfectly altered the Sense, a Circumstance, which no doubt you would have complained of, if I had afforded you any Cause. But you had no Cause for such Complaint, and might have been used with the same *Tenderness* throughout, if you had not forfeited my Esteem by quibbling with Testimonies which you cannot deny, and your signal Dishonesty in Misquotation.

Instances of which I shall produce to your Shame, when I come to examine your second Letter: Falshood and Hypocrisy, Sir, have no Title to Civility from me. For in my Opinion, that Man countenances Iniquity, who is civil to it.

You tell the World, *Sir*, " That I have
 " given a furious Assault, to I know not whom;
 " And I have done it, I know not why."—
Sir, I attacked the Methodists, because, People, who pass under that Denomination, propagate

pagate a dangerous Sort of *Atheism*, and talk *Blasphemy*: This was the *Reason* WHY, and I think, a substantial Reason: And for the *Persons whom*,—I could not be so much a Stranger to them, as you represent, since I have produced the Writings of some, and both the Names and Writings of others.

Must it not then appear even to yourself, a strange Flight and Absurdity, to tell the *Publick*, that I know no more of the *Methodists*, and their *Communication*, than the Inhabitants of *Arabia* and *Japan*? When you cannot but remember, that I have often had Opportunities of hearing your Opinions from your own Mouths. As your Brother was of the same *College* with myself; and you, of the same *University*. And when your younger *Apostle* WHITFIELD obtained (I suppose upon a Promise of better Behaviour) *Priest's Orders* at *Oxford*, from the Bishop of *Gloucester*; being of the *Presbytery* of the *Cathedral*, I was obliged to lay my Hand upon his Head, and yet you tell me that I know neither the Men nor their *Communication*.

But, I think for this *Sally*, you have received a sufficient Check, from a Pamphlet entitled, *Considerations on some Modern Doctrines and Teachers*; of which, since you take no Notice of it in your second Letter, I will give you a Specimen here.

“ This, says the Author, * is a tip-top cant

* Page 12, &c. of the Pamphlet entitled CONSIDERATIONS ou some Modern Doctrines and Teachers, humbly addressed to the worthy Inhabitants of St. Alban, Wood-street, and St. Olave, Silver-street, &c. By C. Grange, an Inhabitant, &c.

“ Expres-

“ Expression of the Methodists, and I have
 “ heard it made use of by the Brethren, when
 “ any attempted to interpret *Scripture* contrary
 “ to their Liking—I speak thus freely, because
 “ the Doctrines thus charged upon the *Metbo-*
 “ *dists*, are false Doctrines;---Mr. *Wesley* him-
 “ self; continues he, proves those Doctrines
 “ to be false, by his so strenuously contending,
 “ and affirming the *Methodists* do not teach
 “ them.”---This Gentleman however testifies
 the contrary.---“ For pondering a little upon
 “ these Things, says he, brought to my Re-
 “ membrance, that ten or a dozen Years ago,
 “ or more Time I believe has elapsed since,
 “ passing near the Borders of the *Foundery*,
 “ Curiosity led me to set my Foot over the
 “ Threshold, when I beheld one of the *Lay-*
 “ *Brethren* up aloft and ready to exhibit; and
 “ I have had something like an Impression up-
 “ on my Mind ever since, that his whole *Ha-*
 “ *rangue* was upon the Excellency of *Faith*,
 “ exclusive of *Works*; and that a *Hymn*, or
 “ whatever it might be called, was sung upon
 “ the Occasion, which had the same Tenden-
 “ cy, two particular Lines of which were
 “ still fresh in my Memory.”

“ But that I might not accuse any Person
 “ wrongfully, I borrowed of an Acquain-
 “ tance one of their *Hymn-Books*, where I find
 “ the very Words, being the two last of their
 “ *Hymn* 32d, intitled, *CHRIST the Friend of*
 “ *Sinners*. The Words are:

“ *Believe*, and all your Sins forgiven;
 “ *Only believe*, and yours is Heaven.

“ Other

“ Other of their *Hymns*, have the same Tendency ; in the 44th, it is said ;

“ Look, and be sav'd by *Faith* alone.”

By this then it should seem, that the *Exclusion* of good *Works*, notwithstanding the present Professions to the contrary was once in Fashion at the *Foundery* itself.

This being so universally the Case, Sir, it is no Wonder I should affirm of the *Methodists* in general, that their whole Ministry was an open and avowed Opposition to the 20th Article of the Church of *England*. For those who preach the Doctrine of Salvation without good Works, must father it upon some Parts of Scripture. Because natural Religion has no such Absurdities. But if they father it upon Scripture, they make some Parts of Scripture contradict the Rest, which is charging Scripture with Falshood. For what is Contradiction cannot be true.

I then assert for this Reason, and for others which have been mentioned, Sir, that those who chuse a Clergyman for their *Lecturer*, *Priest*, or *Parson*, who shall be the Author, Retailer, or Publisher of such Doctrine, either by Printing, Preaching or Singing, “ put into “ that Office, which should be held by a Minister of the Church of *England*, an Enemy, “ who undermines not only the *legal* Establishment, but also the Foundation of all Religion.”

And if either you, or your Friend Mr. V—, have openly vilified and set at naught *Morality*, and such Acts of *Piety* as publick *Devotion*, you

E

in

in such Hymns as have been just now attested to be sung at your *Foundery*, and each, or either of you, in your Writings or Sermons, why then, Sir, as you ask me the Question, you are so far, both included in the same Condemnation.

Such, Sir, are the Consequences of opposing a fundamental Article of the Church of *England*, which was established with a View to secure the holy Scriptures from the Reproach of being a System of opposite Doctrines, and Contradictions. Questions respecting disputable Points not very clear, and therefore not very essential to Salvation, should never be drawn into Articles of Faith, or made to require the absolute unconditional Assent of all Men. If in Times of publick Hurry and Confusion, or to favour any particular Party, or through the mere Ignorance of the Compilers such Articles have crept into a System, and for the Sake of Peace have been suffered to remain, I do not find, that by Men of Sense, they have been considered as any better than temporary Institutions, which may be neglected, opposed, or even expunged, if carried beyond their due Meaning, and made the Cause of Disturbance.

The Writers of the * *Weekly Miscellany*, in which Paper, the Father of a certain Person was supposed to be concerned, represent it as the Opinion of *Chillingworth*, *Laud*, *Sheldon*, *Stillingfleet*, that there was a wide Difference between the Obligation of some of the Articles of the Church of *England* above others, that

* *Weekly Miscellany*, vol. 2. Page 83.

they

they are not all of them Articles of FAITH *fundamentally* necessary to Salvation : This allows a Liberty of Interpretation to Men approved of, and licensed by the Governors of the Church, as capable of being entrusted with that Liberty : And they do Religion a Service if by their Learning they are enabled to use it, in such a proper Manner, as to reconcile its Difficulties.

And now, Sir, after this Preface, which I hope may tend to your Information and Reformation ; what have you to say about Dr. *Free's* Preaching against the *Articles*? Does he preach against the *fundamental* Articles? as has been charged upon you and your Associate Mr. *V*—. If he has he deserves the same Treatment, and will stand or fall by his own Laws. Does he preach against any Articles? You do not give any Instance where. Till you can find the Place, therefore I reply to you in the Words of St. *Bernard*, for the Honour of God, and in my own Defence.—*Mibi pro minimo est, ut ab illis judicer, qui dicunt bonum malum, & malum bonum, ponentes lucem tenebras, & tenebras lucem, libens excipio in me detrahentium linguas maledicas, & venenata spicula Blasphemorum, ut ad ipsum non perveniant.*

But it seems I must stop here to say my *Catechism*. For speaking of the *Homilies*, in furious Zeal, you ask me—You have subscribed them, Sir, but did you ever read them?—I believe, I might—but now you talk of reading—*Si satis debacchatus es, Leno*,—Did you never read the Story of the *Caliph*, who, when

the *Sarazens* had got Possession of *Alexandria*, was solicited by some of his Officers, at the earnest Entreaties of the Townsmen, to spare their antient Boast and Glory, the *Ptolomæan* Library, the noblest in the World: To which the *Musselman* replied, that the Books in the Library either contained the same Matters as the *Alcoran*, or they did not.—If they contained just the same things as the *Alcoran*, they were useless; but if opposite, they ought by no Means to be preserved; which latter Article, not being very clear, it was the World's Misfortune, that they should be burnt.—Now not to make a Comparison between the Worth of the *Ptolomæan* Library and our *Articles* and *Homilies*, the Inference I would draw from the History, is this, that as a *Christian*, I ought to be allowed to think as highly of the *Bible*, as this *Turk* did of the *Alcoran*; and therefore by Parity of Reason, I say, that the *Articles* and *Homilies*, either contain the same Things as the Scriptures, or they do not: If they contain the same Things as the Scriptures, then I have them in the Scriptures.—But if they contain Things different from, that is, *opposite* to the Scriptures; then they may be neglected at least, if they ought not to be burnt.—But, Sir, as you have here clapped your Wings and crowed so much, I must not dismiss you yet, till I have made you a little more sensible, that there was no room for *Triumph*. You tell me in your *second* Letter, that you once thought of the *Articles*, &c. as I do now, but say with a retreating Sneer, “that
“ some

“ some of you were *perverted* by reading the “ *Homilies*, after your Return from *Georgia*.” Pray, Sir, how was it that you came to conceive one Way of the *Doctrines* or *Articles* of the *Church* of ENGLAND before you went to *Georgia*, and another Way afterwards. I suppose from a Child you have known the holy Scriptures, I am clear, that when you became a Man, you was obliged to study them; in Consequence then, I gather that you first interpreted the *Articles* by the *Scriptures*, they being your Guides before the *Homilies*; but afterwards, when you *changed* your Opinion, that *Change* was owing, it seems, to the *Homilies*; so then the *Homilies* taught you to understand the *Articles* one Way, and the *Scriptures* taught you another. But, Sir, can you with any Face, as a *Protestant*, set one of these *Guides* in Competition with the other? Do you think that the *Homilies* are more *infallible* than the *Scriptures*. If this be your Meaning, the PROTESTANTS in *England* and in *Ireland* will be a little alarmed at such *popish* Notions; tho’ you may delude them in other Shapes: Are not you aware, Sir, that its *Pretences* to *Infallibility* make one grand *Objection* of the *Protestants* to the *Church* of ROME? How could you imagine then, that the *Homilies* of a *Protestant* Church supposed by its own * *Synod*, or *Convocation* to be a *fallible* Church, should be esteemed as a *Rule* of FAITH preferably to the holy *Scriptures*, from whence they profess to derive all their *Authority*?

* See *Articles* of Religion the 6, 19, 20.

We are not required by the *Compilers* of the *Articles*, to entertain an higher Opinion of *them* or their *Authority* than they entertained themselves: Please to consider then, as their *own Words* express it, what was the Estimation or Value, which they set upon such *Compositions* or *Conventions* as these.

“ They tell you, that particular *Churches*
 “ had erred, and might err hereafter, and con-
 “ sequently that the Church of *England* being
 “ one of those particular Churches might err
 “ as well as the rest.”

“ That the fundamental Maxims, which
 “ we are to adhere to upon a Suspicion of the
 “ Churches Error, and which were to deter-
 “ mine the Measure of our Assent were first,
 “ that the Church *may not ordain any thing*
 “ *that is contrary to God's Word written*: In
 “ the next Place, that it so explain *each Part*
 “ of Scripture, as to keep the Whole consis-
 “ tent with itself.”

These are the Conditions on which we subscribe to the Articles, and when, and where the Condition is made void, the Obligation ceases.

I have given you here, Sir, the *true Spirit* of *Protestantism*, the only *vital Spirit*, which in all wise *Men*, and in all wise *Establishments* however they may differ in *Modes* of *Faith* and *Worship*, is still *invariable* and the *same*. One might produce to this Purpose the Opinions of several of the ablest Divines *abroad*, but I shall content myself with that of the *ingenious* and *judicious* OSTERVALD, some time Minister of *Neuffchatel* in *SWITZERLAND*.

“ *Cecy*

“ *Cecy merite d'estre examiné, mais avec Atten-*
 “ *tion, & sans Prejugé. Icy, il faut se defaire*
 “ *de l'esprit de parti, & reconnoistre de bonne*
 “ *foy les défauts où il y en à. Autrement, si*
 “ *chacun demeure dans la Prevention en faveur*
 “ *de la Societé dont il est Membre, on ne reme-*
 “ *diera jamais à rien. Car, supposé qu'il y ait*
 “ *des défauts,—ne sera ce pas le moyen de cano-*
 “ *niser les abus ?*” ---L'estat de L'EGLISE.

Thus much, Sir, of the AUTHORITY of the *Articles*, which gave a *Sanction* to the *Homilies*. You may see (and not only You, *sed omnes, quotquot estis, cujuscunque Ordinis, Sacrificali minores*) from the Account, that our *Reformers* give of themselves, that the *Subscription* they require is not *implicit*, *blind*, and *absolute*, but in the *Nature* of the Thing a *conditional* SUBSCRIPTION, that it supposes an *Opinion* in the Person *subscribing*, that the *MEN*, who then *presided* in the Church, and may *preside*, are *fallible*, and may *err*; and that you assent to the *Doctrines* of this *fallible* Church, so far and no farther, than as they shall appear to be *consistent* with themselves, and *consistent* with the holy *SCRIPTURES*.

In this Sense I subscribed to the *Articles* myself; and I find the rest of my Brethren, with whom I can converse freely, in the same Sentiments.

This being the State of the Case, Sir, the Ministers of the Church of *England*, who, at this Day are many of them much better *Scholars*, and much greater *Masters*, both of *Scripture* and *Reason*, than some of our *Reformers* were,

were, have a Right to scan the Merit of their *Compositions*, especially in *disputable* Matters, where their Skill might reasonably be called in Question: But no *Minister* has a Right to preach against those *Articles*, which establish the *Being*, and *Attributes* of God. Because this is doing the Work of *Atheism*. Therefore, I say it again, and I say it aloud, that if there be any *Government* in *England*, such People will be for ever excluded from any *publick* Function.

These are Points, Sir, which if you had joined to an honest Heart, the *Learning* of a *Divine*, and the *Sagacity* of a *considerate* Man, you might have determined many Years ago in your own Breast; had not the Itch of Fame and Popularity, the romantick Project of being the *Founder* of a Sect, and the opening Prospects of Advantage and Success, prompted you first to go a madding Yourself, and wherever you found People, that were like-minded, to seduce them to take the same wild Courses after you.

I have lent you the Clue to regain the Paths of *Truth* and *Soberness*, if you please: But if you do not choose to make use of it, as you are gone out from us, I may probably leave you to enjoy your *Errors*; after giving you another Round of *Animadversions*, which you will find sticking in the Sides of your *second* LETTER.

The E N D.